DECLASSIFIED POL 14 VIET S

30

(357)

INCOMING TELEGRAM Department of State

E

47

CONFIDENTIAL

EXCISE

Saigon 14047

Action
FE
Info
SS
G
SP
SAH
L
H
IO
P
USIA
NSC
INR
CIA
NSA
DOD
AID
RSR

NNNNVV MJA658JIA064
RR RUEHC
DE RUMJIR 1464 2011235
ZNY CCCCC
R 201153Z
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC
INFO RUHLHQ/CINCPAC
RUMNMF/CG III MAF
RUMNVH/AMCONSUL HUE
STATE GRNC
BT
C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 1464

b-1
ed

JULY 20

CINCPAC FOR POLAD; III MAF PASS POLAD FRANCIS 38

REF: SIAGON 1014 AND 1387

1. [redacted] WHO HEADS LIST OF SIX CANDIDATES IN [redacted] ELECTORAL DISTRICT (SAIGON), DISCUSSED GENERAL ELECTION OUTLOOK IN SAIGON AND GIA DINH WITH EMBOFF JULY 19. HE WAS OPTIMISTIC ABOUT CHANCES OF HIS SLATE AND THOSE WITH WHOM HE WAS AFFILIATED, FELT THAT THERE WOULD BE NUMBER OF GOOD CANDIDATES ELECTED. HOWEVER, HE EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT ELECTIONS WOULD NOT LIVE UP TO WHAT HE AND

PAGE 2 RUMJIR 1464 C O N F I D E N T I A L
OTHERS HAD ORIGINALLY HOPED FOR - AT LEAST IN SAIGON AND GIA DINH WHERE PRESSURES OF VARIOUS VIETNAMESE POLITICAL FORCES CONVERGE AND ARE AT THEIR PEAK.

2. SPECIFIC SHORTCOMINGS CITED BY [redacted] WERE AN INSUFFICIEN NUMBER OF LISTS AND SHORTAGE OF GOOD CANDIDATES IN FIRST AND SECOND DISTRICTS (SAIGON) AND FOURTH AND FIFTH DISTRI (GIA DINH). SINCE THERE WOULD BE SHRINKAGE AND SINCE ONLY TOP TWO CANDIDATES ON LIST (IN SOME CASES ONLY FIRST NAME LISTED) STOOD ANY CHANCE OF BEING ELECTED UNDER PROPORTIONAL VOTING SYSTEM, NUMBER OF LISTS AND CANDIDATES REGISTERED ON JULY 11 AND 14 WAS VERY DECEIVING HE FELT THIS WAS ATTRIBUTABLE TO SEVERAL FACTORS. FOREMOST WAS TYPICAL ATTENTISM WHICH [redacted] CHARACTERIZED AS BIGGEST FAULT IN VIETNAMESE NATIONAL CHARACTER. THEN THERE WERE PRESSURES FROM BUDDHIST INSTITUTE, FATHER

MICROFILMED BY RS/I

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY Dan Ingberg DATE 10/6/81
PORTIONS DENIED AS INDICATED

DECLASSIFIED

HOANG QUYNH AND FEW CATHOLIC PRIESTS WHO FOLLOWED HIS LINE, GROUP OF OLD-TIME POLITICOS WHO HAD DECIDED THEIR BEST CHANCE FOR PERSONAL ADVANTAGE AND SURVIVAL AS POLITICAL FIGURES LAY IN NON-PARTICIPATION, AND VIET CONG. ANOTHER FACTOR WAS LACK OF CONFIDENCE IN INTENTION OF GVN TO CONDUCT HONEST ELECTION, FEELING WHICH HAD BEEN EXACERBATED BY CHANGES DIRECTORATE

MADE IN DRAFT ELECTION LAW RECOMMENDED BY DRAFTING COMMITTEE. FINAL PROBLEM WAS THAT OF LIST SYSTEM: IT WAS DIFFICULT FOR VIETNAMESE WITH POLITICAL AMBITIONS TO AGREE TO RUN TOGETHER ON LIST, AND FINANCING CAMPAIGN FOR LIST OF CANDIDATES WAS MUCH MORE EXPENSIVE THAN FOR SINGLE CANDIDATE.

3. COMMENT: [redacted] REMARKS COME FROM ONE WHO WAS AND REMAINS STRONG PARTISAN OF SINGLE-CANDIDACY ELECTORAL SYSTEM. HOWEVER, WITH THIS RESERVATION, HIS REMARKS ABOUT THE GENERAL ELECTION OUTLOOK IN SAIGON AND GIA DINH SEEM WELL-TAKEN. EXCLUDING CHOLON (3RD ELECTORAL DISTRICT) WHICH IS SPECIAL CASE, THERE ARE ONLY THREE LISTS IN SAIGON OUT OF 13 WHICH INCLUDE PROMINENT PERSONALITIES AND ONLY TWO IN GIA DINH OUT OF 16. THREE SAIGON LISTS ARE: LIST #5 IN FIRST DISTRICT HEADED BY PHAN KHAC SUU AND TRAN VAN VAN; LIST #7 IN FIRST DISTRICT HEADED BY DANG VAN SUNG (PUBLISHER OF CHINH LUAN) AND NGUYEN TUONG BA (MEMBER OF PEOPLES-ARMY COUNCIL); AND LIST #1 IN DISTRICT TWO HEADED

BY LA THANH NGHE AND TRIEU SEN HOACH (MEMBER OF CITY COUNCIL AND PROMINENT IN CHINESE COMMUNITY). TWO GIA DINH LISTS ARE AFFILIATED: LIST #2 OF FOURTH DISTRICT HEADED BY DINH XUAN QUANG (MEMBER OF PEOPLES-ARMY COUNCIL) AND LIST #1 OF FIFTH DISTRICT HEADED BY DR. PHAN QUANG DAN, BOTH OF WHICH ARE RUNNING UNDER DR. DAN'S TRADITIONAL "RISING SUN" SYMBOL. WE KNOW OF SEVERAL PROMINENT FIGURES WHO INTENDED TO RUN BUT BACKED OUT AT LAST MINUTE (E.G. LAWYERS TRAN VAN TUYEN, TRAN THANH HIEP AND VUONG VAN BAC), APPARENTLY DUE TO PRESSURES FROM VARIOUS RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL ELEMENTS OPPOSING

DECLASSIFIED

DECLASSIFIED

ELECTIONS. BAC'S DECISION NOT TO RUN WAS, HE SAYS, DIRECTLY ATTRIBUTABLE TO THREATS ON HIS LIFE RECEIVED FROM UNKNOWN PERSONS AND TO RUMOR CAMPAIGN CHARGING HIM WITH OVERLY-CLOSE CONNECTIONS WITH DIEM REGIME.

4. PROBLEM CITED [ ] OF PAUCITY PROMINENT CANDIDATES IN SAIGON-GIA DINH AREA IS, IN EMBASSY'S VIEW, MORE PSYCHOLOGICAL THAN SUBSTANTIVE. THERE APPEAR TO BE QUITE A FEW YOUNGER CANDIDATES (LAWYERS, TEACHERS AND PROFESSORS, CIVIL SERVANTS, ETC.,) WHO SHOULD BE CAPABLE OF DOING GOOD

PAGE 5 RUMJIR 1464 C O N F I D E N T I A L
JOB AS MEMBERS OF CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY, PERHAPS BETTER THAN WELL-KNOWN FIGURES WHO ARE SITTING THIS ONE OUT. NEVERTHELESS, SMALL NUMBER OF PROMINENT FIGURES IN SAIGON METROPOLITAN AREA MAY CREATE PROBLEMS WITH PRESS WHO COULD MISINTERPRET IT AS INDICATING EXISTENCE OF WIDESPREAD OPPOSITION TO ELECTIONS. WE WILL WORK WITH GVN TO ATTEMPT HEAD OFF IN ADVANCE ANY SUCH REPORTING BY PLACING SPOTLIGHT ON COUNTRY-WIDE PARTICIPATION AND AVOIDING TOO MUCH EMPHASIS ON SAIGON AREA. HOPEFULLY, THIS APPROACH COMBINED WITH FACT THAT THERE ARE SEVERAL PROMINENT PERSONALITIES AND 18 MEMBERS OF SAIGON AND GIA DINH COUNCILS RUNNING IN METROPOLITAN AREA WILL REDUCE PRESS CRITICISM. LODGE

DECLASSIFIED